



Improving Transportation for People with Special Transportation Needs through Coordination

*How will your county respond to this new
opportunity?*

August 23, 1999

Produced by the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT), with the Public Transportation Office, Washington State Department of Transportation.

This document is available in alternative formats. For more information, please contact ACCT Secretary Debra Mendoza at mendozd@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-7922.

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1. Do we coordinate now—or later?

What does this section include?

Section 1 of the guidelines provides county officials:

- Information on the Agency Council for Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) legislation that was passed in the 1999 legislative session
- A definition of special needs transportation
- The goals of coordinating special needs transportation
- Instructions on how to apply for coordination planning and start-up grants
- Information to help in deciding whether or not to plan and develop a coordinated system for special needs transportation during this funding cycle

How can counties improve special needs transportation and save money?

Legislative action on special needs transportation

A bill passed in the 1999 session, amending RCW 47.06B, the ACCT statute. It lays out leadership and organizational structures at the state and local levels for the coordination of special needs transportation.

- A. Section 5 (2) directs ACCT to “Initiate local planning processes by contacting the board of commissioners and county councils in each county and encouraging them to convene local planning forums for the purpose of implementing special needs coordinated transportation programs at the community level.”
- B. Section 5 (3) directs ACCT to “Work with local community forums to designate a local lead organization that shall cooperate and coordinate with private and nonprofit transportation brokers and providers, local public transportation agencies, local governments and user groups.”
- C. Section 6 stipulates that ACCT “may request, and may require as a condition of receiving coordination grants, selected county governments to convene local planning forums and invite participation of all entities, including tribal governments, that serve or transport persons with special transportation needs. Counties are encouraged to coordinate and combine their forums and planning processes with other counties, as they find it appropriate.”
- D. Section 6 continues with the responsibilities of the local community forum to: “(1) Designate a lead organization to facilitate the community planning process on an ongoing basis; (2) Identify functional boundaries for the local coordinated

transportation system; (3) Clarify roles and responsibilities of the various participants; (4) Identify community resources and needs; (5) Prepare a plan for developing a coordinated transportation system that meets the intent of this chapter, addresses community needs, and efficiently uses community resources to address unmet needs; (6) Implement the community coordinated transportation plan; (7) Develop performance measures consistent with council guidelines; (8) Develop a reporting process consistent with council guidelines; (9) Raise issues and barriers to the council when resolution is needed at either the state or federal level; (10) Develop a process for open discussion and input on local policy and facility-siting decisions that may have an impact on the special needs transportation costs and service delivery of other programs and agencies in the community.”

Who are persons with special transportation needs?

“Persons with special transportation needs” means those persons, including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.

What is the purpose of coordination?

Through coordination you can:

- Increase efficiency
- Reduce waste and duplication
- Enable more people to access social and health services, education, and jobs
- Provide basic mobility
- Extend and improve transportation services to people with special transportation needs
- Use community resources better, so that more people can be served within available funds
- Provide transportation in ways that contribute to livable communities, a vital economy and a sustainable environment

Why does the Legislature want you to coordinate at the community level?

The legislature determined that:

- Transportation systems for persons with special needs are not operated as efficiently as possible
- The special needs transportation delivery system is fragmented and duplicative
- Individual programs developed transportation mechanisms for their specific client populations in solitary and isolated fashions
- Transportation mechanisms were developed incrementally, over time, because clients could not get to services
- Health and human services, transit and pupil transportation program budgets are insufficient to meet the demand for transportation

- Health and human service programs do not consider transportation to be their primary mission, and often do not budget specifically for transportation
- Coordination allows for more trips to be provided to more people, within program funding levels
- Community level coordination will enable communities to design systems that meet unique community needs

Isn't transportation coordination the responsibility of the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations?

The regional transportation planning organizations were established primarily to prepare transportation strategies for their regions. Typically, this has been interpreted to be a regional transportation plan focused primarily on streets and roads, ferries, rail, bicycles and public transit. As a rule, there has been little direct involvement of social service agencies, school districts, and other providers of special needs transportation.

The new legislation does not specify a role for regional transportation planning organizations. They should be considered candidates for lead organization status, but their selection as lead organization would be at the discretion of the local community forum. The community forum has the latitude to select the organization believed to be most appropriate to the participating agencies.

Do all counties have to convene local forums?

The goal is for all counties/regions to implement coordinated special needs transportation systems by 2008, when the ACCT legislation sunsets. However, not all counties must begin the process in the first year. The funds associated with the legislation, and with ACCT's ability to attract grant funding, will support planning and implementation projects in only a few areas of the state each year.

If a county opts out at first, is there a waiting period before it can opt back in?

Between now and 2008 every county will have an opportunity to receive coordination planning and implementation grants. ACCT is anticipating renewed funding with each budget cycle and will apply for other grants as they become available. There will not be a formally set waiting period, but participation will depend on how many counties decide to begin their coordination process each year and how much money is available.

If my community decides to do this, what help can it expect from ACCT?

ACCT can provide:

1. Grants to support system development and start up activities
2. Technical assistance

Technical assistance from ACCT and DOT staff will be available throughout the local forum, planning and implementation processes. The nature of that assistance will be determined, in part, by the type of project proposed by the participating counties and by the level of technical expertise already available to counties. It is not intended to displace or duplicate the local lead organization and community forum roles. Areas in which ACCT and DOT staff can provide assistance include:

- Educating the community about ACCT, the legislation, and the background of special needs transportation coordination
- Identifying the organizations in your county that should be included in the county forum and in the planning and implementation group
- Agenda planning for the first meetings
- Setting criteria for determining the boundaries for the coordinated system
- Developing criteria for selecting a lead organization
- Explaining how to obtain planning and startup funds
- Developing strategies to obtain commitment and participation from group members
- Preparing by-laws, memos of understanding and interagency agreements
- Sharing best practices and the successful and unsuccessful coordination ventures of others
- Determining qualifications and skills for paid staff
- Mediating conflict
- Interpreting legislative intent
- Resolving issues at the state level that create barriers for local coordination planning groups
- Understanding various models for coordination and the ramifications of each
- Identifying appropriate technology and software
- Identifying different approaches to fair cost allocation
- Identifying options for system design elements
- Reviewing and giving feedback on work group products
- Setting performance goals and determining performance measures
- Identifying and applying for other sources of funding

How much assistance will be available? Will it differ by county?

ACCT wants counties to be successful, so will try to provide all the technical assistance that a county needs. It will be limited only by the resources available to ACCT. Assistance will be different only to the extent that county needs and desires will be different.

What can the ACCT grants be used for?

Planning grants can be used by the lead organization to hire full time staff or consultants to work on the coordination plan, to cover the costs of supplies, mailing, travel, computer support and other administrative expenses.

Startup funds can be used to purchase technology, computer software, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), or to support elements of implementation that cannot be supplied through the resources of participating organizations. These will typically be one time only purchases, as the funds are not intended to be used for ongoing support.

What are the benefits and risks of coordinating?

Participating in the ACCT coordination projects can benefit your community in many ways. Coordination makes sense from both a public policy and a business perspective.

You will have:

- Access to funds to support local level planning and start up
- Access to ongoing support from ACCT and DOT staff
- Leverage in accessing other funds and grants from federal and state sources
- Preference in grant applications requiring local coordination and partnerships
- Greater ability to meet local demand for special needs transportation
- Improved mobility within the community
- Enhanced ability for welfare to work clients to access job training and work sites
- More work hours for school, transit, and paratransit drivers as vehicles are used more
- Economic advantages to the community (more people can access goods and services)
- Improved quality of life for your residents
- Strengthened working partnerships that create an environment conducive to future problem solving in your community
- Lower unit costs through more efficient use of resources
- An easy to use system
- Greater awareness of available services
- Improved management information to support decision-making
- Environmental benefits through reduced traffic congestion, reduced stress on the transportation infrastructure, and reduced need to build, or acquire, additional infrastructure

What are the potential risks to my county if we participate?

Developing coordinated systems is a very difficult task.

- Participating organizations must invest staff time in meetings, building partnerships, developing the community plan and doing their part in implementing the system. It is unlikely that planning grants will be used to compensate for this time
- Building the system requires immediate resource investment, while the payoff comes later

- Protection of turf may sabotage the effort, if participants are unable to focus on community benefits instead of what they fear losing
- The community may invest a good deal of time and energy, yet be unable to successfully resolve disagreements
- Although startup funds will be available, the region must find resources within the participating organizations to sustain the coordinated system
- The ambiguity, uncertainty, and change resulting from a new process can stress existing systems

What will communities need to do?

The process has several stages:

1. ACCT notifies the counties of the availability of funds to support coordination
2. County officials decide to participate and notify ACCT in writing of their decision
3. The county convenes a local forum to:
 - a. Decide whether or not the community is ready to embark upon a coordination planning and implementation project. If yes:
 - b. Consult with neighboring areas and determine the appropriate boundaries for local/regional special needs transportation coordination. A county can be included in only one area
 - c. Select a lead organization
 - d. Apply for an ACCT planning grant
4. Upon receiving the ACCT planning grant, the lead organization:
 - a. Assigns or hires staff or a consultant to work on the coordination project
 - b. Organizes and maintains a planning and implementation coalition involving all affected agencies, programs, organizations, and decision-makers
 - c. Conducts a rigorous planning process
 - d. Determines the commitment, capacity and willingness of the participants and community leaders to develop, implement and operate a coordinated special needs transportation system. If yes:
 - e. Designs a coordinated special needs transportation system
 - f. Prepares an implementation plan
 - g. Develops an evaluation process
 - h. Identifies a lead organization for ongoing operations and oversight
 - i. Applies to ACCT for start up funds
5. The lead organization for ongoing operations
 - a. Receives the start up funds
 - b. Implements the system
 - c. Oversees ongoing operation, evaluation and improvement of the system

If my county wants to begin a special needs transportation coordination project, what should we do?

Your county government needs to write a letter to ACCT by September 15, 1999, at the following address:

Jeanne Ward, ACCT Administrator
Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation
310 Maple Park Avenue SE
PO Box 47387
Olympia, WA 98504-7387

In your letter, inform ACCT of:

1. Your county's intent to convene a local forum to consider a project to coordinate transportation
2. The name, position and phone number of the person who will convene the forum
3. Your approximate time frame for convening your community forum
4. What assistance, if any, you want from ACCT staff in convening and running your forum

What constitutes a community forum?

A community forum consists of representatives from agencies, programs, and organizations that:

- Provide transportation
- Purchase transportation on behalf of clients
- Arrange for transportation on behalf of clients
- Provide social, health or other services to clients with special transportation needs
- Use special needs transportation

A community forum would also include:

- Key community leaders and decision-makers
- Major employers or employer organizations
- Employee representatives

Will everyone who wants a planning grant get one?

ACCT hopes to give planning grants to all areas that apply. However, if there is not enough money for all the applicants, there will be a selection process.

What criteria will determine who gets planning grants?

ACCT will assess the probability of your successful formation and maintenance of an effective and committed planning group. Criteria include how well the group can:

- Negotiate differences
- Agree upon roles and responsibilities
- Produce a valid planning product
- Design a coordinated system that maximizes community resources
- Implement and operate a system in collaboration

To assess an area's probability of success, ACCT will review:

- The history of successful community collaboration to solve community problems
- The participants in the process—are the key players involved? Did any significant player drop out?
- Financial and other resource commitments made by the participating agencies and organizations
- The strength and quality of existing partnerships among the key players
- The status, capability, and credibility of the lead organization in the community
- The commitment of the participants
- The support of local government

Who can apply for the planning grant? Who can't?

The lead organization applies for the planning grant. This must be an organization that has the ability to enter into a contractual arrangement with ACCT to receive and manage funds.

An organization that has not been selected by the community forum to be the lead organization may not apply.

Who will receive startup funds, and when?

ACCT intends for a community to get start up funds when it:

- Completes the planning process
- Submits a plan
- Requests implementation funds
- Has its plan approved by ACCT

Since ACCT will be working closely with the forums, it is expected that the forums will produce plans that will be approved as submitted. However, if that does not happen, ACCT staff will work with the forum to address weaknesses in the plan.

If there are more forums submitting implementation plans than there is money, a selection process will be necessary and not all plans will be funded until additional resources are obtained.

What criteria will determine who gets start up funds?

ACCT will assess the likelihood of successful implementation and operation of the coordinated system. To determine this ACCT will look at:

- The degree of broad-based support for, and commitment to, the plan
- The clear identification of, and agreement to, organizational roles and responsibilities in implementing and operating the system
- Evidence that the system can be sustained when ACCT funding is gone
- The strength and quality of the ongoing system leadership
- The degree to which the plan meets the provisions of the ACCT legislation

How much money will my community get?

Funding will be based on the community forum's estimate of what it needs to:

1. Conduct a rigorous planning process
2. Effectively launch the new system

ACCT has determined that the costs of designing and implementing a coordinated system will vary from county to county. In some counties, the amount needed may be substantial. However, the funds will be awarded incrementally as available. Fully funding a coordinated system may take several funding cycles, as money becomes available to ACCT through grants, legislative appropriations, and other sources. Once a community begins the planning process, it will have priority for subsequent funds, so that it can complete the entire process.

How long will the money be available?

Funds are appropriated on a biennial basis, so we will work within that time frame. However, it may be appropriate for some planning and implementation processes to span biennia. We will try to accommodate such needs.

ACCT funds will not support ongoing operations after a system has been implemented.

2. We want to coordinate now—Let's convene a local forum

What does this section include?

Section 2 guides counties in convening and running a local forum so the community can make these important decisions:

1. Does the community have the capacity, desire, support, and readiness to embark upon a special needs coordinated transportation system planning and implementation project?
2. What are the appropriate boundaries for a special needs coordinated transportation system?
3. What lead organization will spearhead the development of the community plan?
4. How much money is needed from ACCT to conduct a comprehensive planning and system design project?

Convening your forum

Your goals in convening your forum are to:

1. Bring together the appropriate people for making the decisions which are charged to the forum
2. Engage representatives from a broad spectrum of the community, so that a variety of perspectives can be considered

Who should participate in the local forum?

To identify potential participants in your county's forum, review the organizations and groups in your county that have a stake in special needs transportation.

Did you forget anyone crucial?

To ensure that you identify all participants needed for a successful forum, you should:

- Inventory all transportation providers, social and health services programs, educational programs, medical care facilities, etc.
- Ask key participants to identify others who have an interest in the outcome
- Identify the types of participants needed and develop a contact list
- Create a geographical check list. (Have all areas of the county been included?)
- List the special transportation needs groups. (Have organizations providing services to all special needs groups been identified and included?)
- Recruit users of the system

Many are called but few are chosen. How will you select forum members from the many potential participants?

The forum participants will make three decisions:

1. Do we want to form a coalition and apply for an ACCT grant to plan, design and implement a system of coordinated transportation for persons with special transportation needs?
2. Should we partner with other counties when selecting coordination boundaries?
3. Who will be the lead organization?

In creating the forum, address the following questions:

- Who needs to be at the table to make these decisions?
- How many are needed to get full representation, yet keep the group to a manageable size?
- Who will select the participants?
- How quickly can you make these decisions? Will it require several meetings with ongoing information sharing and debate, or will it be done in one meeting?

What is the best organizational structure for your forum?

Clearly defining your organizational structure will facilitate work and create a team that is cohesive and task focused.

Forum leadership

Things to think about:

- How will a group leader be designated?
- Will county government supply the leadership, or will a leader be chosen from among the participants?
- Will leadership be vested in an individual, an organization, or a group?
- What skills, knowledge, and experience are needed?
- What are the responsibilities of the group leader?

Administrative and support functions

Depending on how long you expect the forum to take in making its decisions, there may be ongoing administrative details to be taken care of:

- Maintaining mailing lists, taking minutes, distributing materials, scheduling meetings, and providing basic support functions
- Setting agendas
- Chairing meetings
- Communicating with ACCT
- Choosing meeting dates, locations, and times

- Assuring accessibility of meeting sites and information

Agree on operating procedures in advance to avoid conflict later

Decide early in your process:

- How decisions will be made
- Whether consensus is a goal
- If committees or work groups will be established
- If all organizations and groups will participate on an equal basis
- How to encourage open, honest discussions of why members are, or are not, in favor of transportation coordination
- The purpose and potential outcomes of community coordination
- How to provide opportunities for all members to express opinions and ideas

Clarify roles and responsibilities

Who does what?

- What is expected of each participant?
- What is the desired role of ACCT and DOT staff in supporting the community process?
- How will a government to government relation with tribes be established and maintained?
- How will tribal sovereignty issues be addressed?
- What role will riders of the system have in the forum?
- Who will be assigned responsibility for each of the activities and work products of the forum?

Do you move to the next step—planning and implementing a system?

Analyze the community environment

Deciding to move to the next step, planning and implementing a coordinated system for special needs transportation, may depend on:

- Participation and support of the key community organizations
- Support of the political bodies for the effort
- The likelihood of successful completion of a community planning process
- Potential cost effectiveness

Setting boundaries for your coordinated system

What boundaries make sense to the community?

- Where do people with special transportation needs go to jobs and to receive social, health, educational, and other services?
- Do transportation providers who are members of the forum operate outside of county lines?
- Are there traditional alliances with other counties for other planning or service delivery purposes?
- Which geographic areas combine to make a logical service area for coordination?

Will tribal reservation lands be include in the boundaries?

- What are current practices when it comes to service delivery and planning?
- What is the desire of the tribes?
- Are tribal decision-makers involved in the forum process?

Consult with border areas

- What neighboring areas are candidates for inclusion in the service boundaries?
- Are they convening community forums?
- Are they receptive to combining for planning purposes?
 - ♦ If so, what intergovernmental agreements needed?

Selecting your lead organization

Which organizations should be considered?

Carefully think about the qualities needed in the lead organization. Don't assume that a transportation provider should be the lead organization. Find an organization that:

- Has the capacity to provide leadership to a major community planning process
- Is interested in doing this
- Is the most able entity within the selected boundary area to spearhead a major special needs coordinated transportation planning project
- Has credibility and acceptance within the community
- Has a history of building positive community partnerships and working collaboratively in the community
- Has the qualities and skills that are needed
- Can fulfill the roles and responsibilities that you will assign to the lead organization
- Wants to be lead in order to advance the goal of coordination, not to advance its own business plan or minimize possible negative impacts on itself
- Can legally enter into contracts and manage grant funds

Do the forum members agree on the choice of a lead organization?

Your chances of success are greater if your community concurs on the choice of a lead organization.

- Decide how to pick the lead organization
- If you can't reach consensus, be sure that the dissenting organizations still agree to participate

Apply to ACCT for planning and system design funds

The lead organization submits the application to ACCT, including the following information:

1. What process was used to convene the community forum?
2. How many meetings were held and what was the purpose of each?
3. a. What agencies, organizations, and groups were represented on the forum?
b. Were any key community players absent?
 - ◆ If so, who and why?
 - ◆ In what way does their absence affect your ability to develop a coordinated special needs transportation system?
4. a. What process was used to determine your coordination boundaries?
b. What factors influenced your decision?
c. Was there consensus within the forum on the boundaries?
 - ◆ If not, what organizations disagreed?
d. If the coordination boundaries will include more than one county, do all participating county governments agree?
5. a. Which organization was selected as lead? (Provide contact information)
b. What other organizations were considered?
c. What process was used to select the lead organization?
d. Was there forum consensus on the selection?
 - ◆ If not, what organizations disagreed?
6. Provide information to demonstrate that your lead organization is viable, financially accountable, and has the capacity to manage a coordinated special needs transportation planning and system design project. Such information might include:
 - An organizational chart
 - A budget summary
 - An audit report
 - Examples of grant management experience
7. What was the process for getting political and organizational support for the decisions made by the forum?
8. How much money do you need for the planning and design phases of this project and for what purpose?

Provide supporting documents:

- Letters of support or agreement from county government and other key community participants

- Your forum membership list
- Meeting minutes

3. The planning stage begins

What does this section include?

The first step in your planning process is to mobilize a coalition to take action on an identified community problem—the need to coordinate special needs transportation. Section 3 leads you through the following steps in creating an effective coalition:

- Selecting the members of your coalition
- Establishing a structure for the coalition
- Assigning leadership: your key to success
- Organizing the coalition (structure, roles, procedures, administrative support)
- Managing reluctance—keeping people at the table
- Communicating
- Preparing your members for the work ahead

Selecting the members of your coalition

A coalition is a formal, multi-purpose, long term alliance of community organizations, individuals, and interest groups that work together to achieve common goals.

Three goals in selecting members for your coalition:

1. Find people who can make decisions and do the work
2. Ensure complete representation from all groups and sectors that are affected by, or that have a role in, special needs transportation
3. Involve active participants from throughout the coordination boundaries

Your original group may need to be reconstituted

Membership on the coalition that will plan and implement a coordinated system for special needs transportation may differ from the membership of the original community forums, particularly if the boundaries for coordination extend beyond county lines. Therefore, you may need to reconstitute the group with different members.

Look at your forum membership to address to following:

- Who will continue as part of the coalition?
- What additional or different representation is needed?
- What organizations, agencies, groups and community sectors need to have a presence on the coalition?

Review the possibilities

For membership in your coalition, you should consider, but not be limited to, the following:

- Mental Health Regional Support Network
- Local offices of the Department of Social and Health Services
 - ◆ Community Services Offices
 - ◆ Children's Services Offices
 - ◆ Alcohol and Substance Abuse Offices
 - ◆ Division of Developmental Disabilities Offices
 - ◆ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Offices
- The Area Agency on Aging
- The Health Department
- School districts
- Transportation providers, including public transit, non-profit organizations, and private for profit providers
- Large medical facilities
- Residential facilities for the elderly and disabled
- Faith/church groups
- Emergency transportation providers such as ambulances and fire departments
- Head Start programs
- Day care facilities
- Business organizations
- Regional transportation planning organization
- Tribes
- Other major community planning groups
- County and city governments
- Managed Care medical plans
- Housing Authority
- Low income housing projects
- Medicaid brokers
- Community Action Councils
- Community Health and Safety Networks
- Consumer advocacy groups
- Local Employment Security Offices
- Welfare to Work groups
- Kidney dialysis programs
- Private Industry Council
- Economic Development Council
- Service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club
- Private funding sources such as United Way, Easter Seals
- Grange organizations
- Veterans programs
- Employee representatives

- AIDS networks
- Community colleges
- YMCA/YWCA
- Parent—Teacher Associations

Selecting members from among these organizations

When selecting your members consider:

- The skills and experience that are needed
- Groups/agencies/people that have already done work to coordinate transportation
- Key purchasers, providers and users of special needs transportation
- Those who will be affected by the work of the coalition
- Who needs to be at the table and who simply needs to be in the communication loop
- Who can make decisions and do the work, and not just be bodies to fill the slots
- Who can act on behalf of their organization
- Who in the participating organization has knowledge of, or experience with, transportation as it relates to that organization
- Who can make or break your product/process/decisions

Making choices

A process for selecting coalition members should be decided upon and applied. There are a variety of approaches. You will also need to decide if it is the role of the lead organization to do this, or if it is the responsibility of the coalition. Some options:

- Recruit based on the skills, knowledge, and experience that are needed
- Ask each organizational head to appoint a representative from his/her organization
- Appoint through a political process
- Ask for volunteers
- Form a membership recruitment and selection committee

Leadership: your key to success

Leadership is critical to the coalition's ability to produce a high quality plan and to implement strategies leading to desired outcomes. Effective coalitions are generally led by individuals who display the following characteristics:

- A democratic, empowering leadership and decision making style
- Effectiveness in the political arena
- Networking skills
- Visibility and a high level of involvement in the coalition
- A style that supports the participation and decision making of members
- The ability to promote cohesiveness and involvement
- A practice of providing opportunities for active participation outside of meetings
- Broad based information sharing
- The ability to promote an atmosphere of inclusion, openness, equality and collaboration

- Constructive handling of conflict
- The ability to provide incentives and benefits to members
- A demeanor that conveys confidence about the ability of the coalition to meet its goals
- The ability to build and maintain one to one relationships with members
- The vision to keep the group on track and to move the group forward after defeats and in times of discouragement
- The openness to acknowledge and correct mistakes as they occur
- The ability to negotiate and mediate differences in a positive and team building manner

Organizing the coalition

The structure of the coalition will be different from the forum structure, since the tasks are different and the life span is considerably longer. The membership of the coalition is likely to be very large and inclusive. To work efficiently, it will need a more formal organizational structure, procedures, and administrative support.

Creating a formal structure

A formal structure will help:

- Facilitate participation, consensus building, and decision making
- Simplify the work process
- Create a collaborative team that is cohesive and task focused

A recommended structure

Based on studies of the effectiveness of coalitions in accomplishing complex tasks, the recommended structure is:

1. A Steering Committee of key decision-makers who have the authority to approve policy, commit funds, provide overall direction, and commit their organizations to action
2. Task specific work groups, task forces, and sub-committees working at the direction of the steering committee
3. A network of stakeholders that may be more loosely connected with the coalition, but are important members in terms of giving feedback, supporting the goals of the coalition, and spreading its message throughout the community

Assigning administrative functions

The coalition as a whole, the steering committee and the various sub-committees need support.

Decide how administrative and support functions will be handled. Someone must:

- Maintain mailing lists, take minutes, distribute materials, schedule meetings and provide other basic support functions
- Set agendas for meetings, publicize meetings and invite participants
- Determine what kind of staff or consultant is needed by the coalition
- Hire staff or consultants, supervise, and perform other personnel functions

Avoiding headaches by clarifying and formalizing roles now

You should write out roles and responsibilities in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or an Interagency Agreement. The document should outline member rights and responsibilities and define the role that each member will play in the coalition.

In defining the roles and responsibilities of members, the following questions will need to be answered:

- What is the function of the lead organization?
- Does the lead organization provide all the staff support, do member organizations contribute staff, or will other arrangements be made?
- What are the contributions of each of the member organizations to the coalition in terms of financial support, in-kind contributions, staff support, level of participation, data and information, publicity, communication, and other activities or items?
- Who will speak for the group in public?
- What role does the coalition want ACCT to play?
- What is the role of coalition staff?

Operational guidelines

In order to reduce confusion and conflict, decide upon and formalize the coalition's operational guidelines or by-laws.

- How will meetings be run?
- Are there meeting ground rules?
- What are the expectations about meeting attendance?
- Will there be professional facilitators at meetings?
- How will decisions be made and by whom?
- How will differences of opinion and conflict be overcome?

Managing reluctance: keeping people at the table

Not everyone will be excited about this—what will you do? You will need strategies for engaging key organizations which are not interested in joining the coalition or which have joined, but are not active participants.

- Check their positions to see if differences of opinion can be bridged
- Explicitly acknowledge the diverse interests of the parties early in the process
- Honestly and openly address worries and fears about potential losses or change that might result from the process

- Establish by-laws that create a safe environment in which participants can work on potentially controversial and conflict provoking issues
- Decide who needs to be at which meetings so that people's time is most effectively used

Have strategies in place to increase benefits and reduce costs to coalition members:
Examples include:

- Training the leader or group members in group dynamics, conflict resolution, negotiation, accommodating group cultural differences, and other group processes
- Engaging a group facilitator who can manage meetings effectively
- Spending time to develop partnerships, trust and an understanding of each other before beginning on the task
- Spending time to clarify to members what their organization, clients, and community can gain if the coalition is successful
- Celebrating successes
- Acknowledging and appreciating every member's contribution
- Making progress on the coalition's tasks

How will you communicate?

A communication plan can keep people engaged, reduce anxiety and generate support.

- How is the media used to publicize activities of the coalition and its members and to inform the community?
- What mechanisms are in place to communicate within the coalition?
- Who will speak for the coalition in public?
- Who will represent the coalition with ACCT?
- What are the linkages with the important players in the community and political structure who are not members of the coalition?
- What inter-organizational linkages have been developed to facilitate communication and interaction among members?

4. Set the scene—understanding your community and knowing your options for coordination

What does this section include?

Section 4 provides information on how your coalition can:

- Create a picture of how transportation is provided in your community
- Understand the value your community places on special needs transportation
- Become informed about the coordination options available to you

Your work here is the foundation for setting community goals and designing a system that meets community needs.

Create a picture of how transportation is provided in your community

How does your community currently deliver its transportation services?

1. Determine community capacity to provide special needs transportation
2. Assess community need for special needs transportation
3. Determine how well current resources are used to meet community needs
4. Develop a comprehensive set of data to guide the coordination planning process

Gathering information

Good information leads to good decisions. Spend time deciding what information you need and where to find it.

- What data needs to be collected?
- What data is already available?
- What does DOT or the MPO/RTPO have for data?
- What work has already been done to coordinate special needs transportation? Are reports and data available?
- Does the local health department have demographic data?
- What are the potential sources of data at the local or state level?
- Who is responsible for gathering the information?

What are the existing community resources for providing transportation?

You need a complete understanding of how special needs transportation is currently provided in your community.

- What organizations are providing transportation services?
 - ◆ Volunteer programs (include time and passenger restrictions)
 - Reimbursed
 - Non-reimbursed
 - ◆ Taxi companies or other private for-profit transportation organizations
 - ◆ Non-profit transportation organizations
 - ◆ Transit systems
 - ◆ Residential facilities
 - ◆ Social service providers
 - ◆ Human service providers
 - ◆ Health service providers
 - ◆ School districts
 - ◆ Tribes
 - ◆ Hospital-based transportation
 - ◆ Fire department non-emergent transportation
 - ◆ Other transportation providers
- What type of service are they providing?
 - ◆ To whom?
 - ADA compliant?
 - Restrictions on passengers carried?
 - ◆ Where?
 - ◆ When?
 - ◆ What fare?
 - ◆ What routes?
 - ◆ How many vehicles?
 - What capacity vehicles?
- Are there transportation providers in neighboring counties/states that provide service in your area?
 - ◆ How will they be included in your inventory?
- What transportation supports are in place?
 - ◆ Vehicle housing and maintenance facilities
 - ◆ Call taking, scheduling, and dispatching centers
 - ◆ Driver training programs
 - ◆ Safety inspection programs
 - ◆ Van pools
 - ◆ Information and referral systems
- Who funds special needs transportation?

- What other ride sponsors are in the community?
 - ◆ For each, how much money is spent on special needs transportation
 - ◆ How many rides are purchased
 - ◆ Are the funds state, federal or local
- What is available through the Indian Reservation Roads program administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs?
- Are there any non-permanent grant funded transportation programs?

What technology is available and used by the various organizations

Coordination can be very technology dependent. The right technology makes it easier to coordinate. The wrong technology can create barriers. You need to understand the technological capability of the organizations in your coalition including:

- Phone systems, computer hardware, software and networking capabilities, web sites, dispatching systems
 - ◆ Ways in which they are compatible or not compatible with each other
 - ◆ Technological strengths that you can build on
 - ◆ Technological weaknesses that you must overcome

What is the demand for special needs transportation?

Do you know the number and circumstances of people needing transportation?

- Number and types of riders
- Point of origin of trips
- Destinations
- Types of trips that are needed (modality)
- Frequency of trips
- Hours of demand—time of day, week, year

Can you estimate service gaps and deficiencies?

What are your service gaps?

- How many trips for what type of rider is the community unable to provide?
- What points of origin or destinations are not served, or under-served?
- What types of services are needed, but not available?
- Is the frequency with which a particular trip is offered a problem?
- Are there gaps in time of day, week, or year when trips are not offered?
- Do any geographical issues restrict services?
- Are there service gaps and deficiencies that are not currently being addressed?

Do you know the authorizing and operating authorities in your area and do you understand their parameters?

There are a number of special needs transportation funding sources, providers and user organizations. You need to understand the legal and policy environment in which they operate. Once you know their latitude, constraints, and limitations, you can identify real barriers to coordination and find solutions. Among these are:

- Legal requirements for vehicle operations (PTBA, city licenses, taxis, UTC licenses, OSPI RCWs)
- Regulations of the various funding streams with regard to the provision of transportation
- Program policies that govern the provision of transportation
- Insurance and liability requirements
- Standards for driver training, vehicle construction and safety measures
- Confidentiality and passenger safety requirements of the funding sources
- Decision making authority around rules, regulations and policy
- Ways in which these factors are compatible or ways in which they display flexibility that makes accommodation easy
- Ways in which these factors present barriers to coordination

Understand the value your community places on special needs transportation

Take a hard look at your community. Consider the following issues:

1. Assess transportation needs as perceived by community constituencies
2. Understand the priority placed on special needs transportation within the community
3. Judge the capacity of the community to undertake a major planning process and system redesign
4. Assess the support in the political and administrative environment for a major change in how special needs transportation is delivered
5. Develop strategies for mobilizing support in the community

Other planning processes and partnerships

Is there a history of collaborative planning and partnering in your area?

- Has coordination among organizations to solve community problems been successful in the past?
- What collaborative efforts to address community problems or objectives are already in place?

What's missing

Based on the information and data that you have collected, what additional resources are needed to fill the gap between the resources you have and what is needed. Define resources broadly and describe what you need in terms of:

- Vehicles, technology, personnel, and funding
- Participation, involvement, or support needed from any particular entities
- Changes in organizational policies and procedures

What are your the unique transportation issues?

Each community has its own culture, working environment, and challenges. Examine yours. Do any of the following provide opportunities or challenges?

- How significant is special needs transportation in the list of problems facing the community?
- Is special needs transportation included as an issue to address in other agency/organization/community planning documents?
- What are the key transportation challenges in your community?
- What are the cultural issues that impact transportation and coordination?
- Is your area effected by the need to transport across state borders, through reservation lands, or across county lines in order to access needed services?
- Are there pockets within your boundaries where there is no transportation resource?
- What successful transportation coordination projects have already occurred in the community?
- Have there been attempts to coordinate transportation in the past that have failed? Why did they fail?
- Do health, human services, and transportation agencies/organizations enjoy effective and productive working partnerships?
- What is the nature and quality of the relationships among the agencies and organizations? Is there a high or low level of trust?
- What role do the tribes generally play in community planning and problem solving?
- How do organizations communicate with each other? What is the quantity and quality of communication?
- Is planning to coordinate special needs transportation compatible or in conflict with other planning processes and community goals?
- Are there environmental impacts that need to be considered as you plan and deliver transportation services?
- Is the community traditionally supportive of public transit?

What are the major problems and barriers to overcome?

Now that you have examined your community, do an analysis of your situation in terms of:

- Will the organizations in your community work together to improve services?
- Does local government support the goals of coordination?
- Who agrees with the goals of coordination, who disagrees, and who needs more information in order to make a decision?
- Do some of the players fear losing business, status, influence, control, quality of service, contact with clients through coordination? Who, what and why?
- Are there major opponents to coordination in the community?
- Are there overlapping or conflicting objectives among the business plans of the participating organizations?

- What are the major special needs transportation problems?
- What significant barriers must be overcome in order to achieve coordination goals?
- What major changes are needed (awareness, attitude, policy or operations) in order to achieve the desired state of coordination?

Examine alternative strategies for coordination

There are a variety of ways to approach coordination, such as the broker model used by the DSHS Medical Assistance Administration, integration of services, consolidation of operations, or designating a lead agency for transportation. ACCT can help you understand these models and provide examples of models that are used elsewhere.

1. Become informed about the various approaches, strategies and models for coordinating special needs transportation
2. Evaluate each in terms of their ability to meet community goals and the community's capacity to implement them
3. From among the options, select an approach to coordination that is appropriate for the community and which has a high probability of success

What are your options?

Investigate and understand:

- The different approaches to coordination
- Models that are in place in the county, state and nation that might be replicated or modified
- Data that is available on their success
- The definitions of and differences between coordination, integration, consolidation, broker, and lead organization

Evaluate each coordination strategy

Does the strategy meet the needs of the community?

- Is the strategy likely to resolve the key problems that have been identified by the community?
- Are there competing interests that would bias the choice of a strategy?
- Do the players think that any particular strategy makes them a winner or a loser?
- How are community goals met by each?
- What are the limitations of each?
- Are any unacceptable politically or because they are not feasible to implement?
- What level of organizational participation and cooperation is needed for each?
- Which is the most user friendly?
- Which is closest to the intent of the legislation?
- Is each technically possible?
- Which is potentially the most effective and efficient?

Which approach do you choose?

You need to select a coordination strategy before beginning your system design.

- How will the decision be made?
- What is the level of support within the coalition for the chosen approach to coordination?

5. The hard work begins—designing your coordinated system

What does this section include?

Section 5 provides guidelines for the coalition to follow in:

1. Creating a coordinated special needs transportation system that addresses the problems identified during the community planning process and meets the objectives developed by the planning coalition
2. Maximizing the use of community resources so that more rides can be provided within the available resources
3. Organizing and using resources, and operating a coordinated system in a manner that will, over, time meet the legislative requirements for a coordinated system
4. Delivering transportation services in a manner that contributes to vibrant communities, a vital economy and a sustainable environment

Creating a coordinated special needs transportation system

Based on what you now know about your community, you are ready to embark upon the design of a community based, comprehensive, coordinated special needs transportation system. Your system design must address the problems identified during the community planning process and meet the objectives developed by the planning coalition.

☛ **Note:** The questions in this section will be used as a basis for your documentation of your plan.

What are your goals and objectives for a coordinated system?

What do you want your system to do for your community? Describe:

- The goals and objectives of your system
- Your desired outcomes
- The degree to which coalition members understand and agree to the goals and objectives and outcomes

Describe the governance provisions of your system

Address the following in your description:

- List the member organizations
- Is the lead organization for the ongoing operation of the system different from the lead organization during the planning stage? If so, will this organization also provide ongoing leadership to the collaborative process?
- If the lead organization is changing, who will it be and why was it selected?
- Does your plan propose any new or altered institutional arrangements such as a steering committee or a governance board? Please describe. What responsibilities will it have?
- How will operational, policy and financial decisions be made and by whom?
- Are memoranda of understanding, interagency agreements or contracts in place addressing the roles, responsibilities and contributions of all participants in the system? Enclose examples.
- Is there a formal, written, agreed upon process for resolving disputes, conflict and disagreement among the participating organizations? What is it?
- What processes have been established for ongoing communication and sharing of information among participating organizations, the political structures and the community?
- How have you planned to deal with changes in membership and leadership, so as not to lose momentum for coordination?

Describe the funding supports and processes of your system

In your description address the following:

- The specific contributions of each participating organization in terms of money, staff time, and in-kind contributions
- Financial arrangements—will money from participating organizations be pooled, or will each organization maintain control over its own funds?
- How and by whom funds used to support the coordinated system are to be received, accounted for and distributed
- Capacity in your system for riders to purchase trips on their own behalf (unsponsored trip), as opposed to organizations purchasing rides for clients of the organization
- Policies, processes, and parameters covering rate setting for rides

Your system must have all required characteristics

Your system must address all the coordination characteristics specified in the legislation (ESHB 1798). You may incorporate these characteristics into your system design in various ways. Depending on the infrastructure in your community, you can develop some characteristics readily while others will require long term planning and an incremental implementation. A few depend on work being done first by ACCT at the state level.

Describe the options you have chosen for addressing the following system design elements. If it will require implementation in stages over time, explain the phased in

process. Indicate the barriers and challenges in your community that necessitate the incremental approach.

Required characteristics

1. *Organizations serving persons with special transportation needs share responsibility for ensuring that customers (riders) can access services.*

- Are all the organizations with a stake in special needs transportation participating in the community coalition?
- Have roles and responsibilities been clearly established and formalized in a written document?
- Does the coalition have strategies in place to maintain a high level of participation, prevent drop outs, and work through conflicts and disputes?

2. *There is a single entry process for customers to use to have trips arranged and scheduled, so the customer does not have to contact different locations based on which sponsoring agency or program is paying for the trip.*

- How does your entry process work? Who does what?
- Does it rely on coordination through electronic media, coordination through manual processes, an integration or consolidation of call taking functions, or some other mechanism?
- Is it user friendly? Were users (riders) consulted when it was developed?
- What steps does a user go through to get a ride?

3. *A process is in place so that when decisions are made by organizations on facility siting or program policy implementation, the costs of client transportation and the potential effects on the client transportation costs of other agencies or programs are considered. Affected agencies are given an opportunity to influence the decision if the potential impact is negative.*

ACCT will be providing statewide guidance in this area. If the coalition wishes, it can defer action on this item until ACCT produces models for consideration.

4. *Open local market mechanisms give all providers who meet minimum standards an opportunity to participate in the program, and, in addition, allow for cost comparisons so that purchasers can select the least expensive trip most appropriate to the customer's needs.*

The intent of this is not to guarantee business to every transportation provider. Rather, it is to ensure that all will have an opportunity to compete for business, and that the one who can provide the type of trip needed, at the appropriate time, and at the least cost would get the business.

- Who decides which provider to use?

- How will your system address RFP and contracting processes that might make it difficult for purchasers to have access to all transportation providers?
- What processes will be in place to have charges for trips known so that comparisons can be made when a provider is chosen?

5. *There is flexibility in using the available vehicles in a community so that the ability to transport people is not restricted by categorical claims to vehicles.*

- In what way, and under what conditions, have organizations which have vehicles for the transportation of their clients opened up use of their vehicles to clients of other organizations?
- How is the availability of vehicles made known?

6. *There is maximum sharing of operating facilities and administrative services to avoid duplication of costly program elements.*

- In what ways will sharing occur?
- Who is involved? What is the extent of the sharing?
- Is there a phasing plan?
- What are the barriers to an increased level of sharing? How are they being addressed?

7. *Trip sponsors and service providers have agreed on a process for allocating costs and billing when they share use of vehicles.*

ACCT is charged with developing options and models for allocating costs. Your system may elect to implement your own process. If so:

- How does the process work?
- Who is involved?
- Who monitors the process?
- How are disagreements settled?
- Were all effected parties involved in the development, and is there consensus?

8. *Minimum standards exist for at least safety, driver training, maintenance, vehicles, and technology to eliminate barriers that may prevent sponsors from using each other's vehicles or serving each others clients.*

ACCT will provide guidance in this area. Coalitions may defer action on this until ACCT initiates its process for getting statewide participation in the development of and agreement to a set of minimum standards.

9. *The system is user friendly. The fact that the system is supported by a multitude of programs and agencies with different eligibility, contracting, service delivery, payment and funding structures does not negatively affect the customer's ability to access service.*

- How does a rider access and use the coordinated system?

- Have riders been involved in the design of the system?
- Do you have an ongoing means of getting feedback from riders?
- Do you have performance measures developed in this area?

10. Support is provided for research, technology improvements, and sharing of best practices from other communities, so that the system can be continually improved.

This is a joint effort between ACCT and local coalitions. It will be more fully developed over the course of ACCT's life span.

- What processes have you put in place to get information and technical assistance from ACCT?
- What are your communication links with other coalitions that are working on coordinated systems?
- What plans do you have for identifying barriers and getting assistance from ACCT to overcome barriers that cannot be resolved at the local level?

11. There are performance goals and an evaluation process that leads to continuous system improvement.

- Have you developed performance goals for the system? What are they?
- Are your goals S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and relevant, Time-oriented and tangible)?
- What data gathering and reporting systems have you implemented?
- Who collects, analyzes and distributes data?
- What are your ongoing evaluation or check points?

Other system design issues

In addition to the characteristics specified in statute, there are other elements of system design that must be addressed to create an effective coordinated system.

How will you address issues related to jurisdictional/operational area differences among the coalition members?

Service areas and jurisdictional authorities vary from organization to organization. These differences can create gaps and points of conflict.

- What are the differences/overlaps in boundaries for your coalition members (Medicaid brokers, tribal reservations, county, transit system, school districts, PTBA, DSHS region, RSN, Health and Safety Networks, etc.)?
- What accommodations have been made for these differences?

What is the impact of the plan (financial, operational and administrative) on the transportation providers, social and health service providers, and community organizations in your coordination area?

Implementing a coordinated system means changing how organizations operate and deliver services. Your participants may fear that change will be negative for them. It is important to understand and mitigate negative impacts to individual organizations, while not compromising on the benefits to the community as a whole. Describe:

- The potential negative impacts
- The potential positive impacts
- How the plan builds upon and preserves existing transportation capacity
- How the plan builds upon and preserves the ability for organizations to gain access to services for their clients
- How negative impacts will be offset by positive community benefits

How will you address the security concerns of riders?

All programs will be concerned that coordination will compromise the safety of their client groups. Indicate what will be done to minimize risk and fear of:

- Children traveling with the general public. For example, how will the system protect children from potential predators and protect others from unruly or aggressive children?
- Frail or sick people traveling with others
- People riding on unfamiliar vehicles or with categories of passengers whom they may feel are threatening (i.e., substance abusers, juvenile delinquents, mentally ill)
- Missed connections at drop off points for transferring passengers

How will confidentiality requirements be honored?

Confidentiality requirements may present barriers to coordination. You will need to factor this into your system design. Describe:

- Major differences in confidentiality requirements among programs
- Requirements that create significant barriers to coordination
- How you have resolved barriers
- Unresolved issues that require state level intervention
- Your processes for protecting confidentiality

What procedures are in place to minimize abuse of the system by riders?

Your system should have written procedures for dealing with abuse of the system. These might include:

- Defining “abuse of the system” in written documents
- Developing a statement of rider rights and responsibilities
- Educating riders on how to use the system
- Developing procedures to report and investigate abuse

- Developing and publishing penalties for abuse
- Understanding the various funding source's restrictions on what kind of penalties can be applied to those found to abuse the system
- Clarifying who applies and enforces the penalty
- Creating an appeal process for riders who are assessed a penalty

How does your system address insurance, risk and liability issues?

Liability concerns can create barriers to coordination. You need to address these issues in a way that minimizes the risks to participating organizations and provides maximum liability protection.

- Does your system design increase the liability risks of any of the participating organizations, according to their insurance carriers?
- Are there strategies for overcoming these barriers?
- What alternative insurance arrangements have been explored (example: insurance pools)?

What is the process for determining who is eligible for a ride and what level of service is appropriate to the riders needs?

Describe the process that you have developed for screening and approving rides. (This question does not presume centralized call taking and screening, although you might decide to use that approach.) Include:

- Where and by whom is screening done
- How the requirements of the various purchasers of the rides are incorporated into the decision tree
- The parameters that guide rider choice of transportation mode when it is not dictated by the purchaser
- The review and monitoring processes that are in place to ensure that the parameters are followed
- How rider objections to decisions will be handled
- How objections of purchaser to screening decisions will be handled

How will trips be scheduled and dispatched?

Describe the processes for scheduling and dispatching. (Again, this question does not presume centralized scheduled and dispatching.) Include:

- Who does what, when and where
- How information on needed rides get transmitted to the scheduler and dispatcher
- How available vehicles are identified throughout the coordinated system
- How maximum grouping of rides is assured
- Plans for helping riders and agencies schedule appointments so that rides can be grouped
- Plans for asking riders to adjust ride times to accommodate grouping of rides
- Procedures for preventing multiple vehicles from going to the same place at the same time to pick up different people

- The technology infrastructure needed to support communication and scheduling/dispatching needs?

How will customer complaints be handled?

Describe your customer complaint process.

- Is a specific organization or person designated to receive and investigate complaints?
- How are riders informed of the process for filing a complaint?
- How are complaints investigated and responded to?
- Who does what in the complaint process?
- How is data collected on the number, nature and resolution of complaints?
- How is data on complaints used to improve the system?

Other design elements which your coalition may identify

If your coalition has included additional system design elements that you have not previously addressed, describe them here.

Does everyone agree to the system as designed?

Describe the level of participant support for the system design.

- Did all participants agree to the design?
- Have all participants made a commitment to meet their responsibilities to the overall system?
- Did any key player drop out? If so, how does that effect the system? What changes did you have to make to your design? Is it still viable?
- Are there any elements of the design which continue to provoke conflict and disagreement?
- What are your plans for resolving these issues?
- Is there additional assistance needed from ACCT?

What is your implementation plan

Develop a work plan that:

- Enumerates the tasks to be accomplished
- Sets timelines
- Allocates resources
- Assigns responsibilities

Is there support for the implementation plan?

- Have all the players agreed to do their part in the implementation?
- Have decision-makers approved their organization's role?
- Are responsibilities formalized in written agreements?
- What is the plan for conflict resolution during the implementation phase?

Can you sustain the system once you implement it?

ACCT cannot provide funds for ongoing operations, so once your system is implemented, the community will need to maintain it. The premise of coordination is that more rides can be provided within existing resources. Questions for consideration:

- What other funding opportunities and grants have been utilized or are being explored?
- In what way have participating organizations integrated the coordination functions into their ongoing mission and business plan?
- What are the ongoing plans for coalition involvement, leadership succession, membership recruitment, replacement, and maintenance?
- Will participating members maintain their level of resource investment in the coordinated system?

You need an evaluation process

An evaluation process enables you to:

- Use information and data to identify gaps, deficiencies, and areas in need of refinement so that the system continually improves
- Assess whether or not community goals and objectives are being met
- Share successes and lessons learned to help others design and implement coordinated programs

Describe your process for evaluation

Include:

- When evaluations will occur, and the periods of time they will cover
- Who is responsible for what elements of the evaluations
- When evaluations will be completed
- Your performance measures
- The data you are collecting and how you are collecting it
- How you involve stakeholders and riders in the evaluation process

Elements to address in evaluating your system

- What are your measurable outcomes?
- Did you meet your goals and objectives? If not, what factors contributed to the inability to meet goals and objectives?
- What barriers were identified and overcome at the local level?
- What barriers remain?
- Were there barriers that the community was unable to address? Did the state level PACT Forum provide assistance?
- What mid-course adjustments were necessary?
- What lessons did you learn?
- If you could do it over, what would you do differently?

- Did all the partners perform as agreed upon?
- What is the state of the partnerships? Stronger? Weaker? Why?

How will you use your evaluation to improve your system?

Evaluations are meaningful only when they lead to system improvement.

- What is your process for responding to the results of your evaluations?
- Is there enough flexibility in your system to make adjustments based on data and feedback?

6. The local planning is done—let's apply for ACCT start up funds

What does this section include?

This section explains:

1. What needs to be included in the write up of your coalition's plan and system design
2. Instructions on requesting system start up funds so that you can begin implementing the coalition's plan
3. How to submit the plan to ACCT for review
4. The ACCT review and selection process, if requests for start up funds exceed the amount of funds available

Documenting your plan

ACCT will provide an application for you to use to apply for start up funds to implement your system. The application will call for information on how your coalition responded to sections III, IV, and V of these Guidelines. If you document your coalition's activities, decisions, and your plan for a coordinated special needs transportation system as you proceed, you will be able to easily complete the application.

We will look for the following elements:

1. An executive summary
2. A description of how your local coalition was formed and who participated or did not participate in it, broadly addressing the precepts of Section III
3. An analysis of your boundary area, addressing the areas listed in Section IV: demographics, transportation resources, current use of resources, service gaps, the various organizations with a stake in transportation, the unique challenges you face, other planning and projects, and the political, collaborative and social environment in which you operate
4. A description of the coordination option that you chose. Why was this particular option selected?
5. Answers to the questions posed in Section V on the design of your system, your implementation plan and your evaluation process
6. Identification of the lead organization for ongoing operation and oversight of the system. How was it selected? Was there consensus?
7. An account of the amount of start up funds you need and how they will be used
8. An account of what ongoing costs will be borne by the local organizations

9. A description of the review and approval process you went through in your area: Do all participating agencies agree to the plan? Has there been hierarchical approval from the decision-makers in the participating organizations? Is local government in support? Is approval from the political structure necessary? If so, has it been obtained?

You may also wish to include:

- Interagency agreements that outline the roles and responsibilities of the various participation organizations
- Letters of support or approval from those who have approving authority in your system

ACCT review and approval

ACCT will review your application and coordination plan assessing:

- Feasibility of the coordination strategy
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Commitment of those who have a part to play in the implementation and ongoing operations of the system
- Financial feasibility
- Long range plans for meeting the coordination characteristics as set forth in law
- Openness and inclusiveness of the planning process
- User friendliness
- Broad-based community support
- Absence of major programs or providers in the coordination effort

ACCT approval and funding

- ACCT staff will present the plan to the ACCT Council with recommendations
- Upon Council approval, staff will negotiate a contract with the lead organization for operations and authorize funds